

MILITARY EFFICIENCY OF THE COUNTRY.

MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

A communication from the Secretary of War, asking an appropriation for increasing the military efficiency of the country.

FEBRUARY 26, 1856.—Received and read.

FEBRUARY 27, 1856.—Referred to the Committee on Military Affairs, and ordered to be printed.

To the House of Representatives of the United States :

I herewith transmit and recommend to the favorable consideration of Congress a communication from the Secretary of War, asking a special appropriation of three million dollars to prepare armaments and ammunition for the fortifications, to increase the supply of improved small-arms, and to apply recent improvements to arms of old patterns belonging to the United States and the several States.

FRANKLIN PIERCE.

WASHINGTON, *February* 26, 1856.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, February 25, 1856.

SIR: Improvements in arms and munitions of war having been recently perfected, whereby their efficiency has been much increased, it is very desirable that these improvements should be applied as far and as soon as practicable to the arms on hand, both in the government arsenals and in the possession of the States. Although our present supply of arms is as good as, and probably superior to, those of the same date of manufacture of any other nation, we should have, in the use of them in their present condition, to cope at disadvantage with others who may have been beforehand with us in the actual application to their arms of the recent improvements. It has been our

policy, heretofore, to carry on, gradually and slowly, the work of preparation for military efficiency both offensive and defensive; and in pursuance of this policy the estimates of the War Department from year to year have been limited to the execution of such work only as accorded with the ordinary means of our armories and arsenals, with but a small force of operatives in employment. The regular estimates, last submitted to Congress, are based on these considerations. In view, however, of the propriety of assuring, at the earliest practicable period, military efficiency as regards armament and munitions, (we have it abundantly as regards men,) it seems proper that more active and vigorous measures should now be adopted; that we should increase the capacity for production and the force in employment at our armories and arsenals; that we should prepare more rapidly armaments and ammunition for our fortifications; that we should increase our supplies of *improved* small-arms by the manufacture of new ones, and by the alteration of those of past dates of fabrication, including both United States and State arms; and that we should provide ample supplies of ammunition, accoutrements, and implements, for the immediate and most efficient use of the whole.

In order to effect this, it is necessary that more than ordinary means be placed at the disposal of the Executive; and I respectfully suggest and recommend that application be made for an early appropriation of three millions of dollars for increasing the military efficiency of the country, to be applied, at the discretion of the President, towards the objects before stated.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JEFF'N DAVIS,

Secretary of War.

To the PRESIDENT.